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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 29, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. morning-hour.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, predictably, Congress is sidestepping the transportation funding issue for the 34th time with yet another short-term extension, this one until the end of October.

No nation has become great building its infrastructure 3 months, 8 months, 10 months at a time. This is a symbol of the failure of Congress and the last

two administrations to deal meaningfully with the need to rebuild and renew America.

Our country is falling apart as we fall behind. We all can remember the days when the United States had the finest infrastructure in the world. Well, those days have long since passed. By any objective measure, we are now down about 25th in the world, and we continue to fall further.

This failure has consequences for Americans every single day. The average damage to a car is over \$500 a year in maintenance costs due to poor road conditions, more than \$125 billion a year to the economy with congestion, being stuck in traffic.

Because of poor road conditions, infrastructure failures, and an inability to keep pace with growth, there are people being killed and injured every day across America. It doesn't have to be this way.

The failure to get a 6-year reauthorization, which we haven't had since 1998, is due to one simple fact: Congress is still trying to pay for 2015 infrastructure with 1993 dollars.

The solution is simple. Over three dozen Members of Congress have cosponsored legislation to raise the gas tax for the first time in 22 years, legislation that is supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, local government, transit, environmentalists, contractors, the largest collection of groups supporting any major issue before Congress.

It is a solution that was advocated by President Ronald Reagan when he led the effort in his administration to raise the gas tax 125 percent. It is a solution that has been embraced by six red Republican States already this year.

The latest failure to slide into the end of October could actually be our salvation. I have personally lobbied President Obama to call for an end to this charade. The President believes in infrastructure and every year has offered up an approach from his perspective.

I would urge the Congress and all of us to draw one final red line. This October 31 deadline ought to be it. Let Congress stew. Let things grind to a halt if we don't do our job.

The gas tax legislation is already written and can be approved if the Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee would deal with it for a week.

It is a simple one-page bill. It is not necessary to tie ourselves in knots. And then, if we give a number to the authorizing committee, in a matter of weeks, they can develop that 6-year bill that would make such a difference.

We could meet the President's deadline, have this done once and for all, put hundreds of thousands of people to work at family-wage jobs all across the country, improving the quality of life, making our communities more livable, our families safer, healthier, more economically secure, and stop playing with gimmicks that highlight our dysfunction.

Let's prove to the American public and, more importantly, to us that we can actually function the way things were designed, using a user fee that is perfectly attuned to road needs that have served us well for over half a century.

So, please, Mr. President, why don't you make it clear that you are going to call an end to this charade. Give Congress 3 more months to do our job. It doesn't need any more.

We operate from cliff to crisis. Deadlines are simply an alarm clock to get started. Well, this particular alarm clock could start ticking now if you are calling a halt to our continued irresponsibility.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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